

Early Childhood Community Intervention:
Preventing Neighborhood Factors of Crime and Delinquency. *

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Abstract

The social and political public health model established by States to separate and isolate criminals from society has for many decades given way to policies that support and have resulted in the large-scale use of incarceration as a means of punishment for major crimes as well as minor offenses.

Most prevention strategies focus on adolescence and adulthood as cases of serious offenses continue to increase across the nation. Such approaches may be lacking additional significant mechanisms to interrupt and prevent the propensity for crime earlier in children's lives; mechanisms which will determine if children will be future successes in society or adults within the confines of the Criminal Justice System. This review will further underscore the key factors in early childhood development that subject children to quality-of-life-crime and delinquency in the future. Based on analysis of existing literature from Criminology, Psychology and Education, this work will further examine the community-based prevention programs which seek to improve the effects of those neighborhood factors of crime. This review further focuses on programs that have demonstrated long-standing effectiveness at deterring prospective delinquent behavior and life-long association with the system. Programs that foster education services, family value and stability, as well as favorable social behavior early on, reduces a child's probability for delinquency.

There exists beneficial evidence of the cost effectiveness of neighborhood prevention strategies that outweigh the high steadily growing costs of incarceration on our nation. Programs within the framework of community-based prevention not only address factors of crime such as poverty, but also the environmental causes of quality-of-life crimes by focusing on stabilizing communities, promoting family support and combining structure with early education activities. Neighborhood crime prevention efforts have emerged as major alternatives to the Criminal Justice System, to alter and deter early crime paths which lead to adult entanglement with the system. The crucial economic features of life for many poor communities puts them at higher risks of association with the Justice system while high rates of exposure for children, especially boys and young men in those poor communities continually proves to be the norm. These measures demonstrate assurance in reducing the present-day catastrophic impressions of delinquency and relations with crime on America's children and families.

To employ this public health model of neighborhood-based prevention, we must think beyond the usual tough on crime control model, which favors methods of increased detainment and incapacitation as means of deterrence. Efforts should rather be based on the transformative policy implications of early prevention mechanisms in communities across the nation which prove to better serve the necessity to prevent crime.

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Research Design & Objectives

There is a level of important social gain in the funding of interventions that support family, community, early education and long-term prevention of delinquency. This work is of evaluative criteria designed to review early intervention literature that proves a positive association between a quality community environment and a child/late adult free from relations with the Criminal Justice System. The motivation of this legal thought piece better understood as a program evaluation or policy analysis is to aggregate information in order to achieve a necessary result, pushing for policy reform with severe implications for social improvement.

Methodology

Selected research is of scholarly work analyzing the quality-of-life of juveniles, relative to delinquency and crime control alternatives. This work is accomplished by means of a systematic review or evaluative analysis of existing literature from Criminology, Psychology and Education. It compares, contrasts, cross-references and combines research from various studies, identifying characteristics necessary for the establishment of successful early childhood community programming that deters juvenile delinquency. This review set as a program evaluation is therefore by nature descriptive & exploratory not explanatory. It discusses associations between race, age (precisely youth) and their likelihood of entry into the Criminal Justice System.

The author focuses on research that discusses specific program characteristics contributing to the effectiveness of preventive interventions, demonstrating step-by-step what present and upcoming programs should demonstrate to prove proficiency. Studies that evaluate services at different levels of intensity and structure (individual versus group or multi-dimensional) are compared. Risk and protective factors, types of delinquencies, program effect over time and participant outcomes are also studied.

Research on diverse populations especially those neglected due to lack of resources, minority and majority groups partaking in early childcare education systems are investigated. Large scale systematic reviews of well-known national programs as well as small scale reviews of local programs demonstrating effectiveness in their different approaches to prevention are also analyzed. Effective and ineffective interventions are both compared and contrasted for delivery

methods and reasons for variances in results on participant outcomes. This assessment focuses majorly on literature of the 2000s and a few included from the 1900s for foundational purposes; earliest studies included date back specifically to 1974, 1979-1998). The author focuses on two types of common evaluations in crime prevention: process and outcome evaluations.¹ Additionally, research studies that fail to discuss the framework of the various components that constitute these prevention programs or showcase only impartial data not evaluating both the effective and ineffectiveness of existing services across the nation were excluded. Research data from earlier time periods than the above stated (from 1974-1998, from 2000-2015) were also excluded, concentrating on more recent valuations.

PART I

Background

In the United States, there are general laws regarding acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Our system has developed complexities for years, to deal with the large and continually growing array of children who show significant signs of behavioral deviations and subsequent delinquency—among many, one prominent system of complexity is the Juvenile Justice System (mainly detention), a branch of the much larger Criminal Justice System which is so heavily relied on. The Juvenile Justice System looks at two types of behavior in a youngster or potential juvenile to determine their likelihood of going through or staying in the Criminal Justice System: criminal-type behavior and behavior defined as unacceptable, shown by a child. The system has for so long however failed to reform policy that relies majorly on incarceration, to emerged alternatives such as early community programming that instead focus on causes of juvenile behavior within the community and seek to control/deter those causes.

¹ Process evaluation: aims to improve understanding of the activities that are delivered as part of a program and assesses whether they have been implemented as planned. Outcome evaluation: concerned with overall effectiveness of the program(s).

THEORY OF CHANGE

Introduction

The public health model of neighborhood-based prevention from practical and theoretical standpoint better serves the needs of children in communities with high risk factors² of criminality.

In the eyes of the law, a juvenile delinquent or young offender is defined as an individual below the legal age of criminal responsibility and above a minimum age, sufficient to be held responsible/punishable for breaking laws. This review focuses on the child's communal environment prior to breaking the law; what dynamics in their standard of living highlight future delinquent involvement (economic mobility, poverty, structure and family support, collective community efficacy, education, positive versus negative social institutions, etc.) This comprehensive review of scholarly literature is structured as a way of evaluating the components of effectiveness or lack thereof in intervention programs, to subsequently explain why chronic juvenile delinquency and criminality occur, as well as what approaches can successfully solve the problem.

Research question

This evaluation makes the following argument by way of research analyses: if financial services funding incarceration methods were re-appropriated to foster community prevention programming to inhibit factors of crime and delinquency, those mechanisms predisposing children to crime in early childhood years and plummeting quality-of-life will as a result of these intervention alternatives reduce incarceration rates, juvenile delinquency and subsequent adult offending in America into the future — this research review also asks the question of if this process is and will be the most effective option.

² Risk factor(s): defined as the predictor of an increased probability of later offending (Farrington, D. P. (2000), in areas such as acting out, anti-social behaviors and delinquency such as stealing, vandalizing, fighting and abuse.

Hypothesis

Findings will prove that preventing neighborhood factors of crime and delinquency by reinforcing early childhood community intervention programs is more efficient than systemic incarceration.

Much research exists, echoing the disadvantageous effects of incarceration as the primary means of crime control in the U.S. On the other hand, literature has emerged over time supporting the overt need for early childhood programs related to social outcomes and delinquency.

This evaluation will aim at addressing intervention programming that exists or should exist in high risk of producing juvenile youth and future adult offender communities, to demonstrate that historically, policy in the United States highly dependent on incarceration being restructured and amended to prevention alternatives is direly crucial and will be of evident impact.

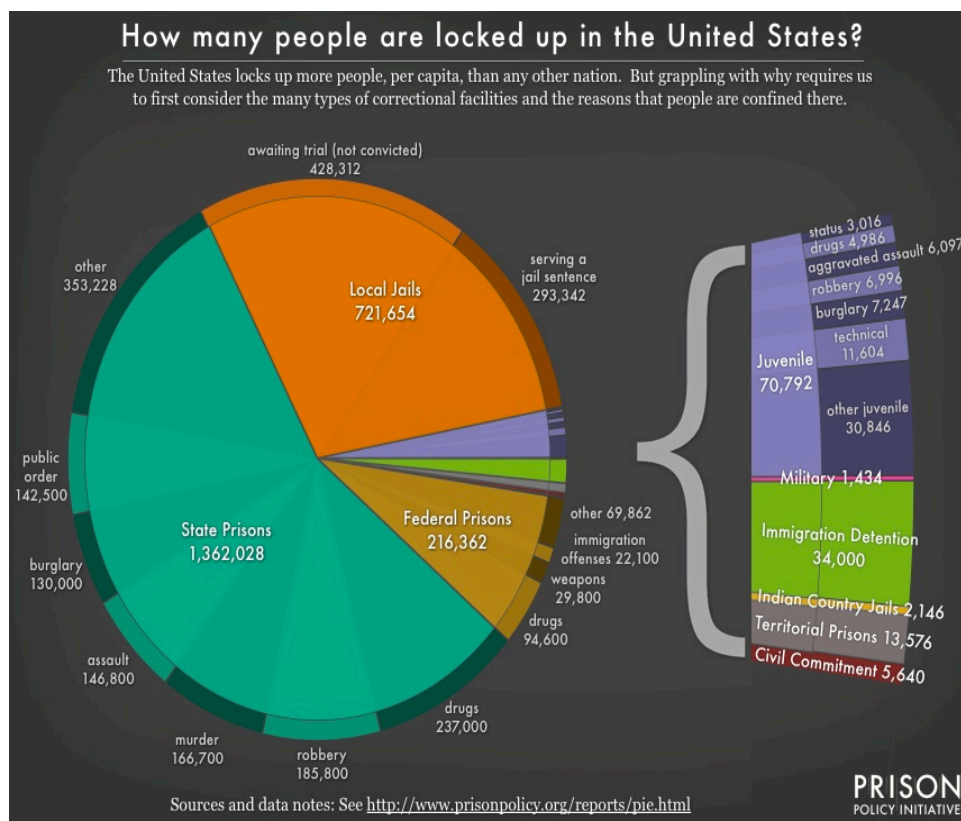
The next sections review prior literature highlighting what is known of prevention efforts, the cost of incarceration and the level of efficacy for both options (programming v. imprisonment). Next, we evaluate programs nationally and locally that are reckoned models for others to emulate, aimed at preventative efforts. Following, we evaluate measures of success: what factors implemented by these programs produced outcomes necessary for effective consideration at the preventative level of juvenile delinquency. An additional section of the paper provides insight into the necessary steps to creating a successful program using the assessed components of already examined programs—what components a program should possess to achieve success and the process of getting said program considered by any legislature/political lawmaking body. Finally, we conclude with policy implications, reform, political considerations and suggestions for legislative changes to be conceivably implemented in the near future.

Prior Research

Findings will demonstrate that preventing neighborhood factors of juvenile crime and delinquency by exploring and re-emphasizing early childhood community intervention programs is more efficient than systemic incarceration.

Over decades, the focus in the United States made a drastic shift politically and socially from one of rehabilitation, subsequently taking a back seat to today's "get tough on crime" approach as the functioning solution to the problems of delinquency and crime. Over the past 40 years, this dramatic increase in the use of prisons as a means to combat crime has left the nation showcasing a more than 1 in 100 adults in jail or prison nationwide average (Henrichson & Delaney, 2012). The Prison Policy Initiative (PPI), a criminal-justice research and advocacy group released a 2014 data report charting information from varying sources, drawing a melancholy picture of precisely who is behind bars: as per their 2014 calculations, approximately 2.4 million individuals are locked up, with about 1.3 million of those individuals in state prisons; local jails estimated to admitting roughly 11.6 million people between 2011-2012 across the 50 U.S states. The PPI also reports that as per juveniles, almost 12,000 youth in 2010 were behind bars for technical violations of probation or parole while approximately 3,000 were held behind bars for status offenses (*status offenses according to the U.S Department of Justice are behaviors that are not violations of the law for adults such as truancy, running away, skipping school and participating in incorrigible activities (Wagner & Leah, 2008); Hockenberry, 2013). The National Center for Juvenile Justice's Juvenile Court Statistics reports more than 31 million youth under juvenile court jurisdiction in 2011. According to the 2014 report by Sarah Hockenberry and Charles Puzzanchera, 79% of these youth were between the ages of 10 and 15, 12% between age 16, and 8% were at age 17 (Hockenberry & Puzzanchera, 2014).

Knowing of the well documented numbers reflecting imprisonment in the U.S, a report by Wagner & Leah (2008) provides further visual aid concerning juveniles:



Cohen, Rust & Steen (2006) conducted an extensive literature review, data testing and analysis of prevention efforts for crime control to assess public preferences on criminal justice spending/appropriations; what did the public prefer their tax dollars be spent on, or the country's criminal justice budgeting priorities be allocated towards. In a comparison of alternative crime prevention models and control policies as well as the "get tough on crime" wave in a nationally representative sample, findings were overwhelmingly in support of increased spending on youth prevention, drug treatment for nonviolent offenders, and police. Prior research here demonstrates that although public opinion polling proves attitudes to be skewed in favor of harsh crime control policy (which is the bases for legislators who rely on said polls as justification for stricter sentencing laws such as the "three strikes laws", mandatory minimums and mandatory parole), when the question is posed to respondents across the nation, favor shifts to toward juvenile prevention programming.

With the aforementioned understanding in mind, the basic idea in this next section is to comprehensively review existing community-based intervention programs aimed at deterring juvenile delinquency before the child enters adulthood where rehabilitation becomes most difficult if not impossible.

Evaluating Existing Programming

To prove the author's initial hypothesis right [*findings will prove that preventing neighborhood factors of crime and delinquency by reinforcing early childhood community intervention programs is more efficient than systemic incarceration*], and develop the research question [*if financial services funding incarceration methods were re-appropriated to foster community prevention programming to inhibit factors of crime and delinquency, those mechanisms predisposing children to crime in early childhood years and plummeting quality-of-life will as a result of these intervention alternatives reduce incarceration rates, juvenile delinquency and subsequent adult offending in America into the future*], we must consider some practices and programs that have proven themselves useful in preventing delinquency or most importantly stopping delinquency before it occurs. For the purposes of this review, we will be assessing **1.** Early Education Intervention Programs, **2.** School/Community based education programs, **3.** Gang prevention programs, **4.** Mentorship programs and **5.** After-school programs — programs to prevent delinquency starting at early ages and to rehabilitate youth prone to or engaging in delinquency by ways of restorative efforts. The argument here is that young individuals/juveniles are capable of steering off delinquent paths, and are more capable of change, if encouraged and given the proper resources and support, especially minority groups in low socioeconomic (SES) rankings and low quality-of-lifestyles who lack access to support and resources and are the most affected populations. These programs range from basic individual one-on-one concentrations to more compound, multistage approaches to reform. Program activities, inputs, outputs and outcomes are assessed.

“Interventions usually seek to remediate disruptive behavior, child delinquency, and serious and violent offending after these behaviors have emerged ... prevention is a better approach. Of all known interventions to reduce juvenile delinquency, preventive interventions that focus on child delinquency will probably take the largest “bite” out of crime”
(Loeber, Farrington & Petechuk (2003).

Early Childhood Education Intervention Programs

Several programs have been deemed among many the most effective at preventative efforts.

1. The Perry Preschool – Ypsilanti, Michigan

The Perry Preschool in Ypsilanti, Michigan is a preschool enrichment program aimed at effectively helping children develop in positivity, void of involvement in delinquency. As one of the most studied examples of effective educational programming (Bates, & Swan, 2013), the Perry Preschool was started in the 1960s to include a random selection of low income African American youth found to score low in standardized IQ tests. The school provided these young individuals with opportunities for ‘active learning’ alongside monthly visits to the homes of the parents during the eight-month preschool year. For every 25 students, there were four teachers. According to Bates & Swan (2013), an ongoing longitudinal study of the program and the participants’ lives found that in comparison to a control group of students who did not partake in the Perry Preschool program, those who did participate demonstrated big leaps in performance on their standardized IQ test scores compared to their initial scores prior to the program. Researchers were able to notice a significant modification in young people who were part of the program—i.e., motivation to do well in school hence more success and an increase in positive life outcomes.

In terms of delinquency, Bates & Swan (2013) account that more than half of the students who did not attend the Perry Preschool either got in trouble for delinquent behavior(s) and or were subsequently detained before they turned 19 years of age. Follow-up studies were later conducted of the prior Perry preschoolers at age 40: demonstrations showcased a reduction (odds were cut in half) in the likelihood of being arrested; these effects were most noticeable among the male participants (Hanford (2010).

2. The Houston Parent-Child Development Center

The Houston parent-Child Development Center (PCDC) is a program developed with similar components of the Perry Preschool program. It aimed at assisting low-income Mexican American families in an effort to prevent behavior problems in young children. The program

helped children do well in school by fostering intellectual and social competence through a wide range of educational and support services. The PCDC is a two-year concentrated education program for children 1-3 and for their respective parents. The families enter or begin the program in 'annual cohorts' when the child is 1-year old. They are randomly assigned to either the program or control groups and complete the program when the child is 3 years old.

End of program evaluations and follow-ups approximately 1-4 years later demonstrated success in reducing incidences of behavioral problems and instead enhancing performance after completion of the program; positive effects were reported on both mothers and children into the future. Participants interviewed years later showed results that children in the control group (non-participants) were more destructive, overactive, negative in attention-seeking and less emotionally sensitive than children in the program who for example gained cognitive skills among many other positive qualities (Johnson & Walker, 1991). By this analysis, the Houston Parent-Child Development Center program was an effective primary prevention approach to behavior problems. This program was similarly designed to primarily prevent school failure in children of low-income families and secondarily to prevent those enabling factors of behavioral problems. Among the preventative programs directed at intervention beginning at infancy and concentrating on parent-child interaction, reports hold that the PCDC had significant impact on the lives of these families (Johnson & Walker, 1991). On the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, program children achieved significantly higher levels on the reading, language, vocabulary scales as well as the composite scores measured in the 2nd-5th grade. Teacher ratings also demonstrated ratings of good classroom behavior (children were less hostile).

Johnson (2006) infers that the PCDC program was driven by the theory that poverty persists, and its participants due to the effects of poverty lack skills attained only through an education –education to move them up socially into better employment opportunities, economic status and consequently improved quality-of-life. So, if educational failure were to be prevented (hence the PCDC program), school achievement/accomplishments would soar to greater heights, upward economic mobility would follow and so forth. The report further makes the assumption that interventions should begin as early as possible in a child's life and that improvement will continue if parents (mainly mothers) are included in the interventions as they progress – this theory is unquestionably relevant and supported by this overall review.

The more risk factors a child is entrenched in (at school, in the community, at home), the more probable their interactions are with delinquency, just as the more rooted they are in delinquency the more those risk factors persist through the generations (Zigler & Muenchow, 1994); some of these factors include low SES, poverty, stressors of unemployment or illness, lack of supervision, history of parental or sibling criminality, abuse, neglect and trauma, deviant peer socialization and dangerous neighborhoods—which is why emphasis should be on the importance of early childhood prevention/intervention plans.

According to academics, the earlier in life that intervention efforts are established, the more likely those tendencies for crime and delinquency can be eliminated due to children's level of impressionability when young (Zagar, Busch, & Hughes, 2009).

3. The Syracuse Family Development Research Program

The Syracuse Family Development Research Program (FDRP) was a learning program in Syracuse, New York between 1969 and 1976 providing education, nutrition, health, safety and human resource services to 108 families. The program predominantly catered to black mothers of single parent households with incomes of less than \$5,000 annually. All mothers partaking in the program were at the mean age of about 18, and had less than a high school education with semi-skilled work or no work at all. Participants began the program from the prenatal period of their children, through the child's elementary school age. Lally (1987) reports that this intervention effort was designed as a support mechanism for parent strategies in enhancing the positive development of their children, even long after the program concluded. A key intervention premise of the Family Development Research Program was the importance of parent teachings, motivation and caregiving to the competence levels and upbringing of young children. Following this premise were the subsequent components: weekly contact with mothers and other family members within the home structure; professional individuals known as Child Development Trainers (CDT's) were recruited, employed and exhaustively trained to assist each family (particularly families with mothers of first or second-born children) with matters of employment, family relations, community functioning and efficacy and lastly child rearing.

Discussing the findings, we are made aware of the results according to longitudinal end-of-program follow-ups indicating clear positive influences on participating children and families—the most pronounced effects were discernable in the social deviance, family

functioning and community relations arenas. The goal of rich, quality family interactions and cohesiveness came to fruition.

Furthermore, results reflected in these longitudinal studies (Lally, Mangione & Honig, 1988) affirm by way of follow-up child interviews that compared to control children (non-participants of the program), program child felt more positively about themselves, tended to report that they would handle their problems more directly and actively, and envisioned an educational future as part of their life trajectory.

Important questions still remain about how the FDRP directly affected or curtailed juvenile delinquency: analysis of the data on juvenile delinquency by researchers reveal stark differences between the functioning of program versus control children. 22% of the control children were said to have been processed as probation cases by the County Probation Department in Syracuse, New York compared to only 6% of the program children in the follow-up sample — the severity/degree of the offenses and the total cost to the court and the probation department handling these cases were shown to be much greater in the control group with children committing serious delinquent acts including sexual assault, robbery, physical assault and burglary (Lally, 1987).

This study and program proposes that the relationship between high quality early education and family support and reduced delinquent behavior later on in a child's life is worthy of further exploration and regard by policy makers across the nation.

4. The Yale Child Welfare Research Program

Another type of program that studies show has demonstrated promising results in terms of preventing delinquency is the Yale Child Welfare Research Program. This comprehensive program was one of service centered on intervention for once again low-income families and their children. Eighteen children from predominantly low-income inner-city Black families participated in the program from before birth to 30 months of age or two-and-a-half years old (Rescorla, 1979). As per reports, each family was allotted a team of project staff members who provided services and documented their work with and observations of the families over time.

Data were compiled on four major components: (1) home visitor program, (2) pediatric care, (3) developmental evaluation, and (4) day care and toddler school. Five years after the project concluded, follow-up interviews were led with 15 of the original research group mothers and

each of the research group children was talked to in a follow-up testing session. Results were taken as suggesting that this intervention effort had helped the participant families by being the compensation in place of the many disadvantageous effects of socio-cultural deprivations faced by children similar to those in the program (effects such as limited verbal abilities), and had helped the project families improve their quality of life (Rescorla, 1979).

5. The Head Start Program

Followed in the traditional footpaths of the Perry Preschool is the Head Start Program. Been in effect since 1965 as part of the ‘War on Poverty’ efforts, the federal program Head Start is a public preschool program that works at reducing the gap between less advantaged children and their more advantaged peers by concentrating on the educational components of early intervention approaches.

Head start began with approximately 561,000 children predominantly of African-American descent, later expanding to serve almost three-quarters of a million African-American and white children in the summer of 1966, just one year after its formation. According to Garces, Thomas & Currie (2000), about \$1,000 in that time period was spent on each child. As budgetary and funding difficulties would have it, Head Start an all year program by the early 1970s began serving noticeably lower numbers of children at higher annual costs per child –example, in 1971 the program served a little under 400,000 children at an annual cost of approximately \$4,000 per child, and in as recently as 2000 to present, about 800,000 children living in poor families are served at around \$5,400 per child. Head Start is administered at the local level with over 1,400 local programs available, subject to federal guidelines of operation. Some of those guidelines illustrate that Head Start should provide nutrition (snacks, meals) to participants, encourage a nurturing and learning environment as well as ensure the facilitation and monitoring the utilization of preventative medical care.

A focus on the effective components of the program demonstrates indicators of economic and social success: we find that whites for example who participated in Head Start showed a significant association to an increased probability of completing high school and later attending college, as well as higher earnings in one’s early twenties. (Garces, Thomas & Currie, 2000). For African-Americans who also participated, there existed a significant decrease in the likelihood of being charged or convicted of a crime. Researchers Garces, Thomas & Currie

make the additional point that in some instances African-American males who participated in Head Start were also more likely than their siblings who did not attend to complete high school; while in other cases, we see positive spillover effects from older children who attended Head Start to their younger siblings as it pertains to criminal behavior. Long-term research studies display boys having participated in the program being significantly less likely than others to repeat a grade, all participants also discussed possessing a lower probability of struggling with a learning disability and more likely to graduate high school, therein trying to later attend college. In more recent years (Bates & Swan (2013), the program has been expanded to very well address the necessity for family support, parental involvement, staff trainings and more teacher to student involvement per classroom. According to the Office of Head Start (2013) in light of this expansion, *“there are now centers or schools that children attend for part of the day or the entire day, family child care homes, and home visits in which staff provide services to children and families.”*

Head Start has demonstrated effectiveness particularly in its speedy and positive effects on children’s social and cognitive growth and also in its sleeper effects³ on the well-being of the child(ren) that may not become noticeable until students enter mid-adolescence and high school. Regrettably, the program which is funded via appropriations has never fully been funded and hence doesn’t allow for services to be rendered at the utmost level; only about one-third of eligible children are served according to Garces, Thomas, & Currie (2000). This undoubtedly impacts practitioners’ capabilities of providing multiple intervention/prevention services. The difficult budgetary climate via the U.S federal government threatens the long-term financial support that Head Start needs to provide for these children in the near future.

**“The earlier the better is a key theme in establishing interventions to prevent child delinquency, whether these interventions focus on the individual child, the home and family, or the school and community
(Loeber, Farrington & Petechuk” (2003).**

School/Community Education and Skill Based Programs

³ Sleeper effects: effects of a program or intervention that may not show themselves until several years after its completion (Bates, K. A., & Swan, R. S. (2013).

Many classroom or school-based programs utilize similar tactics as employed by several rehabilitation programs to dissuade youth from a path of delinquency or crime to more prosocial norms and non-delinquent behaviors as evaluated below.

The Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development project is a development run out of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) at the University of Colorado-Boulder, periodically reviewing data on prevention programs and identifying a good number of school-based programming as models for others to emulate.

The following three programs according to the Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development project have earned the grand distinction of being model programs for others to emulate.

1. LifeSkills Training (LST)

Known as LST, LifeSkills Training is a classroom geared curriculum originally designed as a preventative effort for middle-school aged children and adolescents to deter marijuana, tobacco and alcohol use and abuse. Additionally, LST's objective is to reduce violence and other prohibited behaviors. Through LST, students are taught the importance of developing their personal self-management skills, their social capabilities and most of all resist drug abuse through drug education –instructors in this case include teachers, peer leaders and health professionals.

Various studies of this program demonstrate a decrease in alcohol, cigarette and marijuana usage, as well as a reflection in reduced use and abuse throughout high schools. Furthermore, this middle school program has been associated with evident reductions in delinquency i.e., fighting, verbal and physical aggression.

The Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development project (Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development (2013) writes: *“there are now LST programs at both the elementary and high school levels, as well as a transition program for youth about to graduate from High School.”*

2. Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)

The second model education program as cited by the Blueprint for Healthy Youth Development project, designed as a preventative method is PATHS—Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies. PATH is a program of positive influence, passionate about youth mannerisms as well

as their emotional health. The program is aimed at students from preschool to sixth grade, exposing them to curriculum in their classrooms, teaching them developmentally based lessons on problem-solving skills, self-control, emotional intelligence, positive peer interactions and social competence in an attempt to offer aid in avoiding emotional and behavioral problems.

For 20-30 minutes, 2-3 times a week, the PATHS curriculum is taught by teachers and has been shown through controlled studies to have a significant association with increased protective factors⁴ and prosocial behaviors, as well as considerable reductions in aggression, depression, anxiety, withdrawal and sadness in the classroom (Bates & Swan (2013).

A study by Curtis & Norgate (2007) evaluates the above curriculum designed program as follows:

Aimed at primary aged pupils, PATHS where applied in the U.S as indicated by researchers has reflected an increase in emotional understanding and decrease in behavioral difficulties. Pre-and-post assessments of 287 children (114 from the intervention group and 173 from the control group) presented a remarkable improvement for the intervention group but not the control group; teacher interviews further indicated perceptions that the program helped children acquire a better understanding of emotions and fostered better empathy as well as self-control skills.

3. Project Toward No Drug Abuse (TND)

Blueprints considered one other education based program as a model to be emulated—The Project Toward No Drug Abuse (TND). Originally, TND was founded for students in continuation or alternative high schools (in California) who were labeled at high risk of abusing drugs; the program however has since expanded into traditional high school settings, focusing on three primary factors that they found predicted drug use and violence. Those three factors: tobacco, alcohol and other drug use as well as violence-related behaviors, coupled with delinquent mannerisms and motivating sub-factors such as student attitudes, beliefs, values, expectations and desires regarding drug use are all principal concentrations for the TND project. Additionally, other influences to be taught include social and self-control skills, effective communication skills, coping and decision making that promotes healthy behaviors in young people are also at the forefront of the program.

⁴ Protective factor(s): defined as the predictor of a decreased probability of later offending; minimizing the risk factor's effects (Farrington, D. P. (2000).

Divvied up into twelve classroom session each forty-fifty minutes in length, project TND runs over the course of a four-six week session. These sessions are interactive and are furthermore taught by teachers and other health educators with substantial emphasis on the significance of student-teacher relations, group work and classroom discussions.

As with any other observed program, evaluative studies of alternative school students who participated in Project TND as compared to schools that did not participate showed the following prevalence (Bates & Swan, 2013):

- 27% decline in 30-day cigarette usage,
- 22% decline in 30-day marijuana usage,
- 26% decline in 30-day hard drug usage,
- 9% decline in 30-day alcohol use among baseline drinkers,
- 25% decline in 1 year weapon carrying among males among participants.

Presently, Project TND continues to serve as an effective drug abuse prevention program that targets senior high school-age youth to help them develop skills and acquire the necessary resources to help resist drug use. Scholars have made known the statistic that youth spend about 25% of their 'waking lives' at school, and as a captive audience, the impact of school on youth's behavior must not be overlooked or underrated. TND as a model here appears to be an effective means of reducing the prevalence of problem behaviors in high school youth by regarding the value of a schooling dynamic in a child's life (Sussman, Dent & Stacy, 2002).

Gang Prevention Programs

The United States' Department of Justice reports that youth are at higher risk of being introduced into a gang if they engage in behaviors that are considered aggressive or violent, have problems at school, associate with negative peer influences or live in communities that are unsafe, where youth are already in troubled situations. The DOJ further emphasizes that to prevent youth from joining said gangs, communities across the nation must strengthen and support families and schools, improve community supervision, train teachers and parents to manage disruptive youth and teach students interpersonal skills that dissuade delinquent attitudes.

A few programs across the nation have according to current research (Howell (2011) aimed through distinctive approaches to prevent risk factors. These programs are categorized by the *Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention* (OJJDP) to fall into specified scientific standards of effectiveness in early intervention for juvenile delinquents—Level 1, 2 or

3. Methodologically, levels 1, 2 and 3 all represent chronological databases for programs classified or scientifically proven to prevent delinquency, reduce risk factors or enhance existing protective factors against delinquency and other juvenile issues; these interventions can come about through experimental design, research design, comparison groups etc.; each level is determined by its amount of effectiveness, similar to that of a Likert scale (L-1 most effective, L-2 second most effective or L-3 third most effective). These hang prevention programs go about it through three strategies: the first is to (1) intervene at the individual level with at-risk and disorderly children, the second (2) is family prevention and the third (3) is school-and-community-level prevention; additionally, the programs are visualized as either primary or secondary preventions.⁵

1. The Gang Resistance Education And Training Program (G.R.E.A.T)

G.R.E.A.T, a level 2 (L-2) school and curriculum based gang prevention program has demonstrated effectiveness by OJJDP standards —law enforcement officers contribute to middle school students a 13-week curriculum detailing the dangers of gang involvement. Lesson content in this curriculum underscores cognitive-behavioral training, social skills development, refusal skills and conflict resolution. The G.R.E.A.T program is also accessible on the elementary school level, as a summer program and as training for families/households (Howell (2011).

2. The Preventative Treatment Program (Montreal, Canada)

This L-1 treatment program was designed to prevent antisocial behavior in boys who displayed early signs of problematic behavior. Not initially established with the purpose of preventing gang involvement, the program provides training sessions to both parents and youth to decrease delinquency, substance abuse and gang involvement by focusing on monitoring, positive reinforcement, managing family crises etc. The intervention has been remarkably successful, implemented for white Canadian-born males between the ages of 7-9 from low socioeconomic families who were assessed as having high levels of disruptive attitudes. The Montreal Preventive Treatment Program has since improved school performance, reduced delinquency and substance abuse—making it known that parent training and childhood skill

⁵ Primary prevention: referring to supports and services that outreach to entire populations in communities with large amounts of crime or gang activity (Howell, J. C. (2011).

Secondary Prevention: referring to services and programs directed towards youth who have already displayed early signs of problem behavior and are at high risk for gang involvement.

development can help in steering the child away from gangs before they enter adolescence. Further evaluations of the program by the OJJDP have demonstrated both short term and long term gains for young participants. James C. Howell's 2011 overview of gang prevention, reports that three years post program at 12 years of age we see the following:

- Participant boys less likely to report offenses of trespassing, taking objects worth less than \$10, taking objects worth more than \$10, and stealing bicycles.
- Participant boys rated by teachers as fighting less than non-participant boys.
- 29% of treated boys rated as well-adjusted in school, compared to 19% of untreated boys.
- 22% of treated boys, compared to 44% of untreated boys, displayed less serious difficulties in school.
- 23.3% of participant boys, compared to 43% untreated boys, were held back in school or placed in special education classes.

And, at age 15, boys receiving the intervention were less likely than non-receivers to report:

- Gang involvement or committing other delinquent acts (stealing, vandalism, drug use),
- Been drunk or taken drugs in the past 12 months.
- Having friends arrested by the police.

3. CeaseFire-Chicago

This L-2 community program has demonstrated high levels of effectiveness. The program sponsors a strong public education campaign to impart the message that gang related acts of violence are unacceptable; this works by modifying the community's injunctive norms of what is acceptable and unacceptable through alternatives that too decide what types of actions individuals should engage in (therein promoting positive actions). Psychologically, CeaseFire-Chicago works as a means of informal social control —workers and speakers of the program known as “violence interrupters” (some of them former gang members) work on the streets to mediate conflict and intervene, stemming the tide of retaliatory gang violence.

4. Los Angeles' Community-Centered Approach to Gang Violence

Another concrete example of intervention is the Gang Reduction and Youth Development program. Experts have long been trying to find other avenues of engaging youth away from delinquent behaviors such as gang violence. The Gang Reduction and Youth Development program established in Los Angeles, California is impacting the lives of youth by creating gang

violence programs as community-level efficacy approaches that focus on the whole rather than one young person at a time. The multidimensional program includes *Summer Night Lights*, which keeps parks open late into the night to help youth be occupied during the summer months, keeping them busy and away from problem behaviors through other conventional/recreational activities. Also included are gang intervention workers and violence interrupters who go into communities with known gang affiliations, encouraging gang truces and developing relationships with gang-affiliated youth, equally urging them to seek positive and new paths. The overall program also utilizes assessment tools developed to help community agencies identify youth at risk of joining gangs, thereafter making social services and other resources accessible to them, hopefully intervene in their quality-of-life choices. Studies also find that the program is collaborative work between local organizations, university scholars, the police and concerned parents who have all been acknowledged as players in the vital role of decreasing the level of gang delinquency in L.A (Bates & Swan (2013).

5. Boys & Girls Clubs Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach and Boys & Girls Clubs Gang Intervention Through Targeted Outreach

At L-3, these programs help in deterring youth (ages 6-18) desires for gang membership with alternative challenging social activity and norms that reinforce positive behaviors and decrease gang related behaviors that can keep youth in contact with the juvenile justice system.

6. Movimiento Ascendencia (Upward Movement)

Operated by the Pueblo Youth Services Bureau (PYSB) in Pueblo, Colorado, this L-3 program was developed to serve primarily the Mexican-American population. Established to provide young females with positive alternatives to substance abuse and gang involvement, Upward Movement included drug prevention programs, a youth center for runaways and the homeless, a restitution and community services program, a transitional living program, a diversion program for first-time felony offenders and community-based services for youth involved in the juvenile justice system,—all designed to serve 240 girls in jeopardy of gang affiliation and 120 girls and their families already involved in gangs. The program was also intended to include components of mediation, conflict resolution, self-esteem or social support and cultural awareness all geared at decreasing gang association (Williams, Curry & Cohen (2002).

The 2008 National Youth Gang Survey (NYGS) reported that 50% of all gang members are Hispanic/Latino, 32% are African-American/Black and 11% are Caucasian/White (National

Table . Gang Membership by Study Location

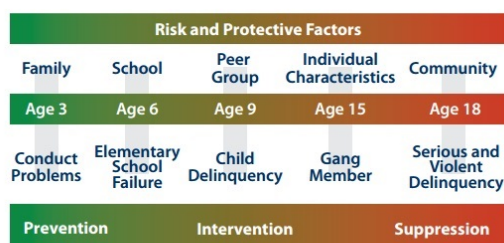
Location	Percentage of Youth Who Are Gang Members
Kansas City, MO	10.1
Las Cruces, NM	11.0
Milwaukee, WI	15.4
Omaha, NE	11.4
Orlando, FL	9.6
Philadelphia, PA	7.7
Phoenix, AZ	12.6
Pocatello, ID	5.6
Providence, RI	6.0
Torrance, CA	6.3
Will County, IL	3.8
Overall	9.1

Source: Esbensen et al., 2010.

Gang Center. (2010) with males making up a larger percentage of the membership in comparison to female members. The figure (Howell, 2011) below provides a small scale visual of youth gang affiliation across the states:

As understood under the family structure dynamic, parents play a vital role in child development; weaknesses in that structure leave room for stressors that create factors favorable for delinquency to flourish. Evaluating these programs and further engaging in these strategies that work at curtailing some of the negative factors of delinquency and adversities that diminish quality-of-life, society can begin encouraging children's growth and development and discouraging the overemployment of incarceration as the primary means of crime control. Howell (2011) also puts forth the following visual framework for delinquency prevention and early intervention as they relate to gang membership as a gateway to chronic criminal behavior:

Framework for Delinquency Prevention and Early Intervention



Source: Howell, 2009, p. 151. Copyrighted by Sage Publications, Inc.

Mentorship Programs

Mentoring is based on the foundational principle that a stable, positive attachment formed between a young child and an adult who demonstrates true interest in that youth's development, can serve as an experience that creates for the youth positive expectations of what good relationships with others ought to look like (Bates & Swan, 2013).

Mentorship programs promote healthy youth development by involving caring non-parental adults in the lives of teens, who then play vital roles. When young people are matched with adult individuals who volunteer to mentor them in school or the community, a bond is formed. This bond can create a relationship strong enough to reinforce prosocial behaviors, increase self-esteem and confidence, help youth increase legitimate success strategies, and provide positive adult contact that reduces risk factors such as antisocial behavior and a lack of commitment to school or academic performance.

A few of these programs include:

1. Big Brother, Big Sister (BBBS)

Big Brother, Big Sister is a network of more than 500 local agencies throughout the nation, maintaining more than 145,000 one-to-one relationships between youth and volunteer adults, and operating as one if not the largest and best-known mentoring program in the country (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, OJJDP). In a research experimental study of BBBS' impact on at risk elementary, middle and high school youth, findings maintain that a large proportion of said youth within the study were economically disadvantaged and experiencing difficulties in academic performance. A total of 554 volunteers between the ages of 18-24, known as "Bigs" participated in the study and were matched with a young "Littles" for a 1-year mentoring period. Overall outcomes of the study showed an increase in academic performance (in subjects such as Science and Language), scholastic efficacy, less school skipping, attitude and behavior improvement, all relative to non-mentored peers who did not demonstrate similar changes (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Feldman & McMaken, 2007). A recent 18-month follow-up study evaluated children who participated in Big Brothers/Big Sisters to be 46% less likely than non-participant groups to begin using drugs, 27% less likely to use alcohol, 30% less likely to hit someone, and had overall better academic behaviors, attitudes, school performance and relationships with parents and peers (Regoli, Hewitt & DeLisi, 2010).

2. My Brother's Keeper Initiative –MBK Alliance

In 2014, U.S President Barack H. Obama launched the My Brother's Keeper initiative to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color. The initiative ensures that all young people are afforded equal opportunities to reach their full potential. The initiative joins cities, towns, business, agencies and foundations who partake in connecting youth with mentorship, support networks and skills needed to successfully go through college, find and keep good jobs that enable quality-of-life for the middle class. My Brother's Keeper focuses on and challenges six specific community goals:

- Ensuring all children enter school cognitively, physically, socially and emotionally ready
- Ensuring all children read at grade level by 3rd grade
- Ensuring all youth graduate from high school
- Ensuring all youth complete post-secondary education or training
- Ensuring all youth out of school are employed
- Ensuring all youth remain safe from violent crime

3. Midwestern Prevention Project

The Midwestern Prevention Project (MPP) is a multifaceted comprehensive program for the prevention of adolescent drug abuse. Its programming is initiated into schools systems and community branches. It targets sixth and seventh grade children in an attempt to prevent alcohol, tobacco and marijuana use which can serve as gateway substances to delinquency and crime, or other antisocial behaviors. It employs active social learning techniques such as modeling, role-playing, student peer leadership, mentoring and homework assignments that involve family members—this creates a social network that works against the use of harmful substances. According to Regoli, Hewitt & DeLisi (2010), a comparison study showed that the program yielded 40% reductions in smoking and marijuana use that were maintained through grade 12 in children who participated (compared to children who did not). Follow-up studies into early adulthood (up to age 23) showed reduced use of all substances and an enhanced parent-child communicative relationship by way of the Midwestern Prevention Project (MPP).

“Every day, mentors in communities across our Nation provide crucial support and guidance to young people. Whether a day is spent helping with homework, playing catch, or just listening, these moments can have an enormous, lasting effect on a child's life.”

— President Barack Obama (2010)

Programs as such and more (i.e., United We Serve community volunteer program, The Harvard Mentoring Project, The National Mentoring Resource Center, Camp Fire Alaska), challenge our nation's cities and states to represent their respective communities by becoming active parties in the many vital structural components necessary to enact any sustainable change—through policy, programming and partnerships. These mentorship programs through school and community encourage the improvement of life outcomes for all young people, ensuring that they reach their full potential, with little regard for where they came from, or circumstances they were born into (poor or rich).

Mentoring programs promote and enhance protective factors such as social and material involvement, teachings of appropriate versus inappropriate behavior, access to information on financial and cultural resources, personal connectedness, supervision and guidance, skills training, career enrichment opportunities for family, knowledge of morals and values and most importantly goals/hopes for the future—all factors that decrease the likelihood of delinquency in the future (Bates & Swan, 2013; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention). This approach has proven itself effective in preventing at risk youth from becoming involved in delinquency and also to help already delinquent youth change their lives for the better; they develop through this process more social and emotional skills and resilience to risk factors of delinquency and crime.

“...mentors commit their time and energy to kids who may otherwise lack a positive, mature influence in their lives. Their impact fulfills critical local needs that often elude public services. Our government can build better schools with more qualified teachers, but a strong role model can motivate students to do their homework. Lawmakers can put more police officers on our streets and ensure our children have access to high-quality health care, but the advice and example of a trusted adult can keep kids out of harm's way. Mentors are building a brighter future for our Nation by helping our children grow into productive, engaged, and responsible adults.”

— President Barack Obama (2010)

After-school Programs (ASPs)

After-school programs are delinquency prevention programs that aim to involve young people in organized social behaviors, learning activities and or recreational activities after school (Bates & Swan, 2013).

Knowing that delinquency is most pertinent as a pastime for children who find themselves idle, advocates for after-school programs that participating/busy children spend less time engaging in illegitimate social behaviors, instead learning positive activities with more supervised time. These advocates affirm that this approach if funded locally, statewide or federally may diminish children's probabilities of acting out delinquently. According to Bates & Swan (2013), ASPs that are small in size, high structured and emphasize social skills, education and character development have shown to be most effective.

1. Camp Fire Alaska

The not for profit organization Camp Fire Alaska is a development agency that aims at giving children opportunities to have fun and participate in safe learning environments by establishing mentoring, before-and-after school programs, summer programs, day and overnight camps, community centers, and rural programs. The programs support remote communities around the State of Alaska as well. Camp Fire also affords youth the opportunity to grow socially, healthily and emotionally by helping them experience and make positive life choices. Its core values include diversity and inclusiveness, outdoor programming, fostering competence, stewardship, fiscal responsibility and financial sustainability. Camp Fire runs 29 child-care programs that serve more than 1,300 children K-6 daily, summer programs that cater to more than 1,400 youth, and community centers providing for nearly 100 youth daily from low-income neighborhoods and families (Camp Fire Alaska, 2015).

2. Parents as Teachers (PAT)

PAT is widely available U.S home visiting program with over 2,300 local programs across the nation. It serves families from the prenatal stage until their child reaches the age of 5. Trained parent educators conduct monthly, biweekly or weekly scheduled home visits depending on the family's preference and needs level. Parent educators work in partnership with parents to strengthen principles of child development, modeling of appropriate activities, and the promotion

of strong parent-child relationships. Staff arrange group meetings where assistance is offered in building support networks with other parents, developing effective parenting techniques, creating opportunities for success and dealing with challenges along the way. Additionally, the program affords parents with the ability to partake in health, vision and hearing screenings that are conducted annually to help detect and prevent child developmental difficulties and delays in learning (Regoli, Hewitt & DeLisi, 2010).

An evaluative study by Edward Zigler and colleagues maintained that Parents as Teachers (PAT) significantly improved school readiness due to better parenting practices, increased reading in children and likelihood of involvement in other community based programming such as Head Start. According to Zigler, poor children who participated in the program's services and other similarly quality preschool programming, demonstrated school readiness scores that mirrored those of more advantaged children (Regoli, Hewitt & DeLisi, 2010).

There are a number of other programs across the United States striving at Early Childhood Preventative efforts that intervene in and deter delinquency and crime; they however have not garnered equal attention and support socially and politically to make them our primary sources of early-on prevention, instead of later-on incarceration:

- Elmira Prenatal/Early Infancy Project
- The Incredible Years Program
- Seattle Social Development Project (SSDP)
- Nurturing Parents Programs (NPP)
- Functional Family Therapy (FFT)
- Olweus Bullying Prevention Program
- I can Problem Solve (ICPS)
- Guiding Good Choices
- YMCA... etcetera

Programs available to all youth, families and communities that work at improving school performance, social activity, discouraging idleness, fostering connectedness in the community and family can effectively decrease future delinquency especially when these factors are addressed before the grand developmental milestones in a child's life.

It is also important to point out that these programs can be administered by government, local schools, community organizations or faith-based-organizations to include preventative access

services like those identified in the above-mentioned programs (school based life skills, mentoring, skill development workshops, curriculum based on classroom and behavior management, social competence promotion, conflict resolution and violence prevention curriculums, community efficacy and organization, individual intervention etc.)

Now that we have an overview of some of the existing programs across the nation, how they run, their principal focus and participant outcomes, we must now look at what makes them effective programming in practice and prevention of risk factors for juvenile delinquency and crime.

Evaluating Good Practice

To understand what at the most foundational level defines effectiveness in these programs, we should examine some general concepts that must be present and seem to be present in the evaluated programs of this review. Aside from the accredited institutions such as the *Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention*, *Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development*, and an innumerable number of research practitioners that study these programs and report on their varying levels of proficiency in reducing early childhood delinquency, a balance of prevention, intervention and suppression strategies are crucial for the success of any program. Embedded in those strategies are the necessary:

- Soundness and clarity of the program's framework,
- Program fidelity (adherence to the guidelines that the program operates upon)
- Strength of program design, and empirical evidence demonstrating that the program prevents or reduces problem behaviors (as the many programs above reflect through decreased percentages in delinquency).

Morgan & Homel, 2013) address some even more comprehensive standards necessary to help guide decisions when conducting an evaluation of what makes a good practice or community program effective. They developed “process evaluation questions” and “outcome evaluation questions” to assess the quality of a program (which we see present in the identified programs within this review). Below, a table of those questions:

Table Questions that can be addressed as part of a process and outcome evaluation	
Process evaluation questions	Outcome evaluation questions
What are the main components or activities delivered as part of a program?	To what extent has the program achieved its stated objectives?
Is the program currently operating or has it been implemented as it was originally designed (ie program fidelity)?	Did the program make a difference in terms of the problem it sought to address?
What are the characteristics of the problem, places and/or people being targeted by the program?	What outcomes that have been delivered as a result of having implemented the program?
Are the intended recipients of a program accessing the services being provided, do they remain in contact with the program and does the program meet the needs of participants?	What impact has the program had in the short term on participants' knowledge, attitudes, skills or behaviour? Are these outcomes sustained over time?
What is the nature and extent of stakeholder involvement in all stages/aspects of the program?	What longer term outcomes have been delivered, including the impact on crime rates and community safety?
Is the program consistent with best practice in terms of its design and implementation?	Who else benefits from the program, such as program staff, stakeholders and government?
What factors impact positively or negatively upon the implementation or operation of the program?	Were there any unintended consequences or outcomes from the program?
How appropriate are the governance arrangements, operating guidelines and where applicable, legislative framework in supporting the operation of a program?	Which program activities or components contributed to the short and long-term outcomes that have been observed?
What is the cost associated with the operation of the program? Is the program adequately resourced?	What external factors impacted positively or negatively on the effectiveness of a program and the outcomes that were delivered?
How efficient has the program been in delivering key activities?	What changes could be made to the program to improve its overall effectiveness?
What improvements could be made to the design, implementation and management of the program?	What are the financial benefits of a program relative to the costs associated with its operation (return on investment)?

Process and outcome evaluation questions as such put forth a great platform for early childhood intervention programs to not only assess themselves but be assessed by others, to guarantee prevention efficiency necessary for positive results to surface.

Characteristics of Evaluated Programs Effectiveness

The programs assessed in this work have demonstrated some level of short or long term effects on curbing delinquent or anti-normative social behavior, featuring similar principles that helped in program success; methodology used to determine effectiveness in discussed programs is identified above. Literature reviews indicate that for the most part, many effective early childhood programs dedicated to preventing delinquency, showcased a composite in no chronological order of the following characteristics:

- Provision for quality educational child care,
- Support for adults or parent through a family setting or a peer group (seeing as effectiveness affects both child and parent),

- Intensive individual components such as weekly to monthly home visits depending on the program,
- An emphasis on activities by the child such as training, mentoring projects, community service or volunteer work
- Programs targeting areas with highest rates of need: fewer resources to spend on early childcare and education, low-income communities with increased risk for delinquency: (several programs focusing on urban, low-income families have produced long-term decreases in antisocial behavior and chronic delinquency).
- Duration and timing: a program with range or length, implemented over a substantial period of time,
- Evidence from staff and participants of project/program effectiveness,
- Formal feedback sought from participants and parents (surveys, in-person interviews),
- Comparison of participants pre and post program,
- Community survey on perception of delinquency in participants, and self-reports of intervention effect by participants pre and post program,
- Decrease in risk factors and increase in protective factors associated with delinquency,
- And an obvious decrease in antisocial and delinquent behavior & increased support for youth in danger of becoming chronic delinquents.

**“From one-fourth to one-third of disruptive children are at risk of becoming child delinquents, and about one-third of all child delinquents later become serious, violent and chronic offenders”
(Loeber & Farrington, 2001).**

PART II

Bridging the Divide

In a social timeframe where we as a nation favor crime control (incarceration) over rehabilitation (programming) due to our burdened need to see immediate and concrete proof that any one method of crime prevention works, studying the many effective components of these programs, their influences in decreasing any one form of delinquency post participation in the program is indication that this early childhood community intervention to preventing neighborhood factors of crime and delinquency approach is in fact operative, though in some cases over a significant period of time.

Defining the scope: How to create an efficient prevention program

In theory, say we hoped to create a successful program like any of the above-evaluated—a program that falls under the social and political public health model we've established thus far, and references mechanisms or components we have identified to be necessary and proficient at prevention in early child development. The basic principles supporting a program within the community-based intervention and early rehabilitation framework will require the practical application of many characteristics of effectiveness and evaluations of good practice as listed in part 1.

Presenting it as a proposal to the criminal justice system and the legislative system for why this model of transformative prevention is best, what would we need to further implement and how?

It is therefore of great significance to indicate that in addition to those individual characteristics cited in part 1, two supplementary mechanisms must be applied:

1. **Risk assessment:** risk assessments must be utilized as screening tools to identify risk factors for delinquency in order to address them before a young person engages in misbehavior. Risk assessments can be carried out in schools, community programs and juvenile justice settings and include the following main objectives (Bates & Swan (2013):
 - a. The production of a profile of a young persons' current and past situation and measure their level of risk of offending or reoffending,
 - b. An evaluation of the significant relationships between the young person's risk factors and activities, then separating those activities most related to delinquency and those that are not influential,
 - c. Identification of factors or people in the young person's life that are most protective and positive in order to emphasize those individuals in the intervention efforts,
 - d. Collection of information about the young person(s) and their family from numerous sources for a wider and more diverse range of information, and lastly
 - e. Development of a plan based on the assessment results, to meet the needs of a young person(s). Develop a program, based on that information.
2. **Research and evaluation findings** that help develop and implement proficient program prevention strategies, instituted to reduce delinquency post juvenile participation within the program (Morgan & Homel, 2013).

Researching good evaluations of how other successful programs are or have been run is an important prerequisite for creating one's own effective crime prevention alternative. Morgan & Homel (2013) consider that good evaluations and findings can in fact define whether a program has been executed as intended, if not, why. Also when research is done, evaluations within that research can specify goals of other programs, if those goals were/are achieved, reasons that a program did or did not work and what effects have been delivered as a result of the program. All of this information can only inform improvements and decisions about intervention/prevention programs; these contributions can be used by policymakers and practitioners in deciding how to address problems of delinquency and crime and by other agencies looking to embark on the establishment of other new, more refined programs.

Real world applications: Political Considerations and Legislative Processes

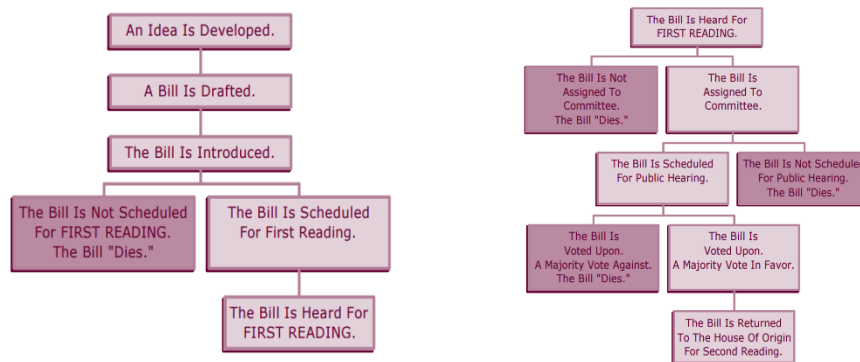
Be it for the purposes of funding or licensing, to see a theoretical early childhood community intervention program through the legislative process, we must refer to the procedural practices that vary on a state by state basis on how to pass any bill or original idea such as a prevention program. In effect, we are identifying what it would take to with the framework we have established in Part 1, launch a successful program or gain funding for an existing program within the political science sphere of influence.

Taking from the State of Alaska's legislature, first the idea (new program or funding plan) is developed by the constituent or individual citizen, interest group, public official, local agency, lobbyist, etcetera; when brought forth, your local legislator (representative or senator) can then decide to sponsor a bill exemplification of that plan, transmitting a proposal and working order for the bill to be drafted. Following, other lawmakers on either side of a political party may be requested to co-sponsor the bill—the bill is thence drafted at the sponsoring legislator's directives by a research and drafting assisting nonpartisan Legislative Service Agency or Legislative Affairs Agency; legal services where determinations such as the cost or fiscal note of the program are regulated. Legal services then prepares a working bill form which is filed by the legislator (Senate or House of Representatives) and subsequently introduced through the Rules Committee. Markedly, leadership must either "call" the bill or not; if the bill is not called or scheduled for "First Reading" during a floor session, it could "die," in other

words dismissed. If called, the presiding officer will have it read to the legislative body and referred to a standing committee or committees for review (Finance, Labor & Commerce, State Affairs, Resources, etc. (Alaska State Legislature. (2015).

In the event that the bill advances from its assigned committee, it gets scheduled for a public hearing where the committee debates its values and shortcomings, allows interested parties to speak in favor or opposition of the proposal and amend it. The bill is then voted upon to advance or be defeated. On the other hand, if the proposal isn't scheduled for a hearing in the first place or if it tabled during committee meetings and not voted upon it can consequently die. If advanced, it is made available for the legislative body to review.

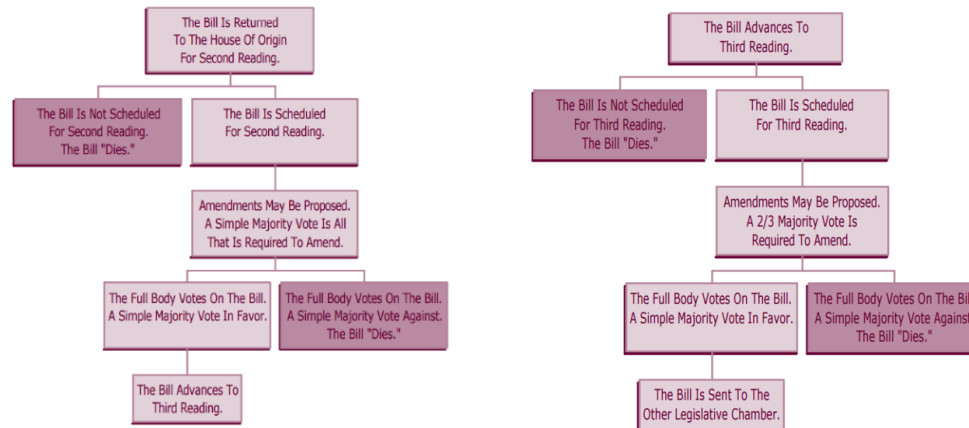
The State of Indiana (Indiana Department of Administration (2001) provides the following illustrations to visualize the first step:



Once the bill has been scheduled for its second floor session/reading by the Rules Committee, motions can be made during floor action to adopt the committee substitute (version reflecting all amendments if any to the bill or program proposal; amendments can also be made on the floor by the entire legislative body). If the amendments are adopted, the proposal is voted on and can advance to third and final reading/passage [in the State of Alaska, you need a three-fourths vote of the membership to approve further advancement] – if amendments are not accepted or the bill is not adopted at this phase, it can be voted down or killed.

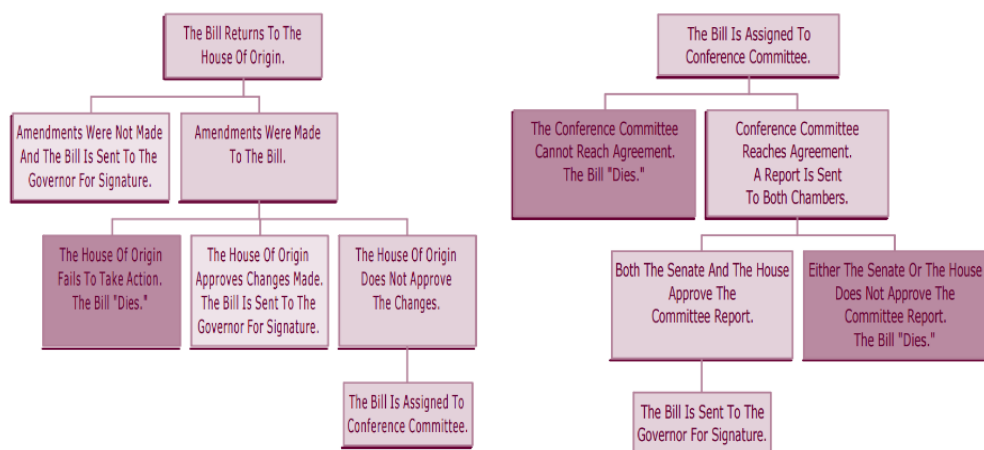
In third reading, the bill needs an affirmative vote and majority of the full body (House or Senate) to advance or once again it “dies.” If advanced, the bill is sent to the opposing legislative chamber (Senate or House) where the process is repeated—to ensure impartiality and

accurate vetting, both the House and Senate depending on which body the bill originated from must go through the same progression accordingly.

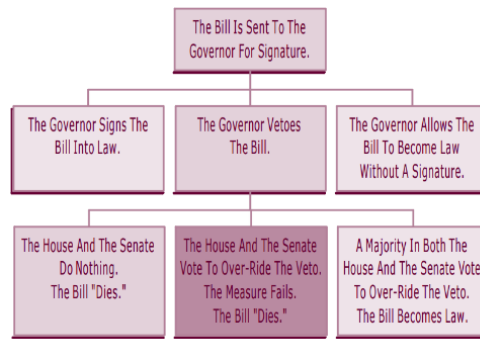


If the proposal has an effective date clause⁶ such as April 5th, 2015 and has been approved by both Houses, that immediate effective date causes the bill to become enacted following the Governor's approval or without his/her formal signature. On the other hand, if it lacks an effective date clause,⁷ it can become law or in the case of this theoretical intervention program, it can be funded ninety days after it has been signed by the Governor or permitted to receive funds without his/her formal signature; in some cases the Governor can veto the bill at this phase, making the entire process legislative process null and void.

The State of Indiana (Indiana Department of Administration. (2001) once again provides a more comprehensive visual version of the process:



⁶ The date on which an act or bill takes effect, normally about the 90th day after it has been signed by the Governor or permitted to become law without their signature; a general Effective Date is one otherwise stated in the proposal/bill (Alaska State Legislature. (2015).



What is a success, what is a failure? Limitations of Ineffective Programming

Outliers that prove no apparent relation between disadvantaged communities and involvement with the Criminal Justice System, or success stories of the exceptions who made it regardless of where they were reared stand in observable opposition to the claims that all delinquency prevention programs (described) have been effective in various settings, for different aged children and for various levels of risk. These outliers throughout the United States under the prevention programming umbrella cannot claim similar success.

There correspondingly exists programs without the same strong foundation as many of the identified programs in this evaluation, making it difficult for the same levels of proficiency to be visible when measuring for reductions in delinquencies such as non-school attendance, dropping out, alcohol and drug use etc. These programs will be reviewed to highlight the relevance in the reluctance the public, criminal justice and political systems feel about investing in early childhood prevention alternatives, then countering those drawbacks by again underlining supportive research literature.

Regoli, Hewitt & DeLisi (2012) stress that in spite the good intentions, many delinquency prevention programs just do not work while some even yield negative effects for youths who have participated in them. Some national favorites well known to students and parents are the *Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E)* and *Scared Straight* programs – they are variations on school, neighborhood and juvenile correctional facility approaches and have been proven unsuccessful at increasing student achievement, interpersonal relations and self-concept.

Evaluating Scared Straight as an example: this is a program for at-risk youth who are essentially provided intense encounters with inmates who describe to them the brutalities of prison life; the

intentions are to shock, scare and deter these youth from committing crimes. Research as well as television depictions show that Scared Straight simply produces consequent criminal activity among youth exposed to the program matched against non-participant youth in the intervention process.

Evaluating project D.A.R.E as an example: this program employs anti-drug use curriculum delivered by law enforcement officers in school classrooms in an effort to deter kids from using drugs. D.A.R.E, founded since 1983 is funded by various U.S government agencies as well as federal agencies (Bates & Swan, 2013) with limited research of its efficiency (West & O'Neal, 2004). Most research fails to establish a substantial transformation in the drug use of youth who were exposed to D.A.R.E. Moreover, opponents of the program point out that because youth are familiarized with drugs through the curriculum, this may actually be contradicting what it intended to diminish —youth may instead learn and inspire to try drugs. Critics further emphasize that the approach practices the use of students as drug informants to disclose specifics about drug use in their homes, later using that evidence to make arrests—all of these efforts only expose the children to risk and not protective factors.

In 2001, the U.S Surgeon General made a significant point reporting that program efficacy hinges on the quality of implementation and the type of intervention; many programs are therefore ineffective not because their strategy is misguided but because the quality of implementation is poor. It is thus imperative to build on programs that already have demonstrated effectiveness in reducing these risk factors associated with later delinquency. Various intervention strategies designed to provide for children and parents at the prenatal stage, infancy and preschool stage, as well as in school or at home, when children are in early elementary grades then high school are effective with the right quality of implementation; also, when run on a local level by community groups, local schools and individual citizens rather than federal or state-level administrators we see great success (Regoli Hewitt & DeLisi, 2012).

Being aware of these inadequacies that too exist within this early intervention approach, why should we as a nation place any emphasis on it?

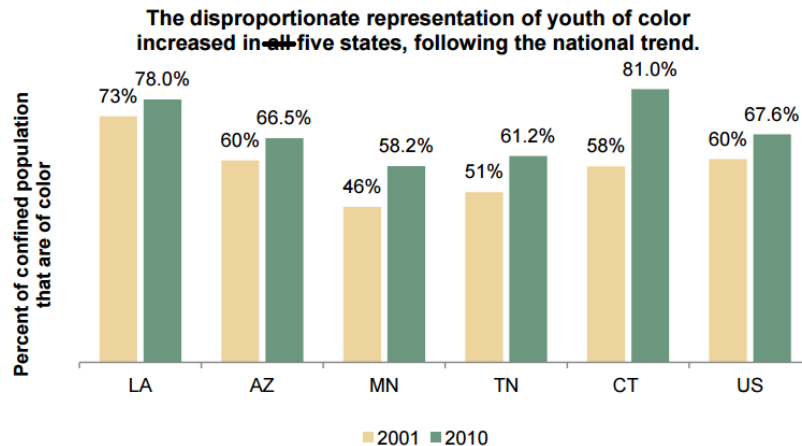
By and large, studies find the United States as of 2008-2009 with over 2.3 million Americans in prison or jail, 753 of every 100,000 people in prison or jail, and one of every forty-eight working-age man behind bars. Substantially higher in every aspect than the rest of the

world (Schmitt, Warner, & Gupta, 2010), the financial costs included for our corrections policies (incarceration) are astounding. Using cost data from the *Bureau of Justice Statistics*, Schmitt, Warner & Gupta reported in 2008 that the federal, state and local governments spent north of \$75 billion on corrections, a large majority spent on incarceration. Programs like the Perry Preschool project for instance, also reported costs associated with the program. However, those costs produced the effective educational outcomes in elementary, secondary and postsecondary education such as employment and other non-delinquent activities expected of prosocial individuals—all of which in the end benefited the families and justice system. The Syracuse Family Development Research Program (FDRP) also found that participants of their services ended up costing extensively less compared to non-participants who may have later become involved with the Juvenile Justice System (court processing, probation supervision or detention, which are very costly (Yoshikawa, 1995).

Every indication here is that if these savings were re-appropriated (cutting down the number of non-violent offenders in our prisons and jails by at best half and lowering corrections costs), some of that money can be appreciably spent on early childhood prevention or intervention programs in neighborhoods across the country. Arguably, even the damages if any that become of participants post the few standing ineffective programs such as D.A.R.E or Scared Straight are far less disadvantageous than those incurred by the juvenile delinquent throughout and post incarceration.

Implications & Policy Reform

At best, children in the United States are significantly more at risk of being held in an institution after committing an act of juvenile delinquency than are children in many other countries across the globe. Worse, youth of color and low-income youth are still disproportionately confined in juvenile institutions than their white counterparts (Paulson (2013).



(Justice Policy

Institute. (2013)

Further research is certainly required on how best to identify specific program characteristics that contribute to effectiveness and design of a preventative intervention. Nonetheless, there is an economic rationale as researchers call it for why the government ought to invest in programs for these low-income families with few resources available to invest in their own children; it is described as *governmental investment in human capital*

—Fundamentally, the costs to the government for providing quality early childhood programs are under this concept balanced alongside the value to society of increased productivity and decreased social problems i.e., delinquency and crime. Researcher Hirokazu Yoshikawa of the *Adolescent Pathways Project* at New York University spoke of this concept also believing that providing child care resources enables poor parents to work and to increase their education, job skills and overall quality-of-life. Providing too for poor children better parenting and better education like many of the aforementioned programs do, yields a more productive labor force in a world market which increasingly values highly skilled laborers. Yoshikawa (1995) in effect makes the following argument: early childhood programs focused on preventing delinquency

and crime embody two prospective bases for savings to society: **1.** Declines in crime and in justice system costs, **2.** Additions to work force involvement when youth who are less delinquent partake in the legitimate economy.

Merging quality early education and family support services brings great promise for preventing misconduct both on theoretical grounds (risk factors for delinquency and antisocial behaviors) and on empirical grounds (program evaluations and reviewed studies).

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency prevention (OJJDP) explored further implications for policymakers at the federal, state and local levels who hold the power to influence the short and long-term operation of agencies and their funding to maintain, improve or create new programs. Policymakers should be concerned about child delinquency for the following added reasons:

1. Child delinquents are expensive to taxpayers and society

Many child delinquents later become chronic offenders; this builds costs to society which according to evaluations by Loeber & Farrington (2001) range from \$1.7 - \$2.3 million in 1997 dollars in single criminal careers. Knowing that high-rate offenders start their delinquent careers at an early age in life, we can safely assume then that these costs continue to grow considerably over time.

2. Child delinquents are a significant social problem

As affirmed in the first point, child delinquents are 2-3 times more likely to grow into tomorrow's chronic delinquents. There is hereby a real risk that our children especially low-income youth will become serious offenders. This danger however is not generally of social panic until late in the game when children are already delinquents. These risks must therefore be acknowledged early on to prevent the development of serious and violent offending.

3. Early intervention with child delinquents is essential

Loeber & Farrington (2001) make the obvious and critical point that lawmakers rather than intervene to prevent risk factors of children becoming tomorrow's incarcerated many, tend to instead fund programs and crime control models that target already older adolescent delinquents and confine them in costly institutions.

Many lawmakers seem unaware of the efficacy and cost effectiveness of alternative intervention in their battle for strict crime control polices—consequently choosing to not fund early

prevention methods that not only work but also substantially benefit juveniles, taxpayers and society as a whole. The public health model should be applied, targeting early risk factors associated with childhood delinquency and consistent disruptive behavior.

The Justice Policy Institute reported that in 2013, five states relied heavily on evidence-based prevention and rehabilitation practices (Tennessee, Louisiana, Minnesota and Arizona), all reducing their juvenile confinement by more than half as a result (Justice Policy Institute (2013). With a heavy emphasis on incarceration throughout the nation, the necessity for prevention, rehabilitation and restoration efforts although time consuming, still remains.

The United States' juvenile justice system does not prevent young children from becoming delinquent. It instead associates costs to managing and controlling children who are already delinquent and seriously involved in the system late in life.

Policy makers must grow in awareness to the fact that there are more cost-effective alternatives to the status quo; imprisonment is too heavily relied upon from the Criminal Justice standpoint, however a Political Science or legislative appeals perspective must be associated to better the results. In some states we see that this awareness has begun—The Sentencing Project for example affirms that in 2009 state legislatures in approximately 19 states enacted policies holding the potential to lessen prison populations and sponsor more effective approaches to public safety (Schmitt, Warner & Gupta (2010). Criminological and Political Science literature talks about considerations for legislation in Congress to create a national commission to undertake a comprehensive examination of the criminal justice system in the U.S. In 2011, former Senator Jim Webb (D-Va.) proposed such legislation as an amendment known as the National Criminal Justice Commission Act to a major appropriations bill (United States Senate Democrats), which soon after failed.

A commission as such should be considered by legislators for it could propose recommendations for changes to prison populations or continuation in policies, new practices (such as funding for early childhood programs) and laws designed to prevent, deter and reduce delinquency and crime, improve cost-effectiveness and ensure the interests of justice.

Conclusion

Impact of Social Intervention on Community

Extensive research supports the principles that our nation's ability to prevent crime may heavily depend on our abilities to help shape community life, at least our most troubled ones due to the extreme profoundness of their problems compared to better off communities. The use of scholarly research has underscored the crucial importance of the early years in the healthy development of children.

This review tackled the challenges of increased incarceration, disadvantaged communities and the negative consequences involved. It has reasoned that much of the successes and failures of American institutions rely heavily on the subsequent successes or failures of their surrounding communities in either producing delinquents and criminally prone adults in the future or socially successful adults to partake in those institutions.

Foundations laid early on affecting childhood positively and dedicated to wellbeing will have beneficial outcomes for the nation financially and socially. Mechanisms for early childhood prevention and intervention i.e., education, devotion, reliance, quality, regulation can restrain delinquencies before they surface.

The young lives of our children warrant a fundamental investment in their education and development in trajectories that nurture their potential and avoid association in potentially detrimental delinquent undertakings; to do this we must work with the community, scholars, experts, legislators, policymakers, practitioners and funding agencies to make change. If preventative efforts are balanced with adequate financial investment and intellectual commitment by society as a whole, they are likely to make a noteworthy influence.

Early intervention community programs collectively and extensively implemented will never fully eradicate juvenile delinquency and crime and should not overemphasize their potential abilities to do so, they can nonetheless comprehensively tackle the issues (drugs, environment, education, family structure etc.) that cause delinquency and may lessen the current devastating impacts of enduring delinquency on America's children, families and households.

Not to assert that all attention & funding be re-allocated to child delinquency and its respective programming, in so doing ignore adolescent/adult delinquency control methods such as detention/imprisonment. However, a more effective approach would be a balance of both

resources, making more room for the foundational causes of serious adolescent delinquency to be addressed in childhood.

Opposing reliance on imprisonment for the sake of rehabilitation, the findings reviewed above offer some compelling propositions about where efforts should be concentrated in the future, and will benefit prospective studies and interventions seeking to prevent offending amongst youth and changing behaviors in children who are already associated with delinquency. The problem of child delinquency and crime is too widespread to be ignored or undervalued —special programs as identified in this evaluation are needed.

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